

State Conservation Commission Assists Local Districts

The Washington Conservation Commission received \$171,000 from Ecology to assist with the 2005 drought response. The Commission allocated \$114,990 to eight conservation districts around the state that volunteered to assist. The Commission set aside \$56,010 for in-house staff activities related to the drought, such as participating in weekly Drought Operations Committee meetings, Drought Response Action Team Meetings, and the Governor's Executive Drought Committee meetings, supporting district activities, contracting with Walla Walla Community College to produce irrigation water management seminars to be hosted by local conservation districts, coordinating with the Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife to help prioritize our efforts, and answering questions from private landowners.

Specific drought-related activities included:

Asotin County Conservation District

- Discussed options with several landowners
- Held irrigation water management seminar and training for private landowners
- Held a drought seminar for private landowners
- Performed irrigation water management planning and loaned and installed soil moisture monitoring equipment on private lands.

Chelan County Conservation District

- Met with local irrigation districts to plan drought strategy.
- Coordinated workshops and published water conservation articles in newsletter.

Clallam Conservation District

- Published newsletter articles and prepared maps.
- Coordinated workshops for irrigation water management and backyard water conservation--90 landowners attending the various workshops.
- Provided education in the use of, and sold rain barrels
- Purchased and loaned out soil moisture monitoring equipment to landowners willing to implement and irrigation water management plan.
- Offered irrigation water management planning and staff training through Walla Walla Community College

Columbia Conservation District

- Provided irrigation water management planning to private landowners.

Foster Creek Conservation District

- Published newspaper and newsletter articles and updated a web site.
- Performed irrigation water management planning to private landowners.
- Helped the Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship, WSU, and Ecology to put on four seminars in drought critical areas throughout central Washington.

Kittitas County Conservation District

- Drought newsletter
- Administered cost share for extra pumps for a private landowner.
- Funded 8 on farm efficiencies with an emphasis on drought (implementation grant money)
- Implemented irrigation water management planning for private landowners.
- Funded a Timothy hay study to determine the effects of drought and the mitigation of it.
- Attended various meeting around the county-- i.e. hay growers etc

Okanogan Conservation District

- Working with WSU and landowners in the Methow Valley to install a networked weather station that will produce data for evapotranspiration rates so that local growers can implement irrigation water management plans with local, accurate weather readings.
- Made information available at the district office and local meetings.
- Performed irrigation water management planning.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

- Providing technical assistance on water conservation.
- Hosted an irrigation water management seminar.
- Published a special edition of newsletter centered on drought response options and opportunities for private landowners.
- Put on an educational program providing for kids in elementary schools in area on how to conserve water for take home.
- Hired Walla Walla Community College to perform irrigation water management planning with conservation district cooperators.